

The Enemy of My Enemy Is My Friend

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Through a series of interviews with and observations of Aryan Nations members, this article explores attempts by Aryan Nations to form an alliance with followers of Islamic Jihad and examines how a shared hatred of the Jew provides a basis for such an alliance. The article discusses growing differences between members of Aryan Nations with regard to such an alliance and the role of Christian Identity in their organization. Some members of Aryan Nations believe that their organization and its members should remain tied solely to Christian Identity. Others believe that people from other faiths, specifically Muslims, who share Aryan Nations's goal of defeating Jews, should be allowed to join Aryan Nations. Leaders in Aryan Nations have tried to satisfy both groups by dividing Aryan Nations into two distinct entities, one political and one religious.

Keywords: *prejudice; hate groups; domestic terrorism; Aryan Nations; Islamic Jihad; Christian Identity*

Since September 11, most of America's concerns about terrorism have focused on countering threats from groups outside the United States. However, many of the most infamous terrorist attacks in the United States, including the Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh, bombings of abortion clinics by Eric Robert Rudolph, and the mass murder committed by Bufford Furrow, have been committed by Americans. These individuals were or are either adherents of Christian Identity, members of Aryan Nations, or both. A recent article in *Intelligence Report* (Blejwas, Griggs, & Potok, 2005) states that in the past decade, there have been an estimated 60 domestic terrorist acts committed by individuals in hate groups and suggests that most of these domestic terrorist acts have religious underpinnings. This article examines ongoing changes in Aryan Nations, one of the most notorious hate groups in American history, and focuses on Aryan Nations' attempts to establish an alliance with one of its former enemies, followers of Islamic Jihad. Through ethnographic research conducted with members of Aryan Nations, the impact of this alliance on changes within Aryan Nations, especially the religious beliefs of its members, as well as changes in the relationship between Aryan Nations and followers of Islamic Jihad will be presented.

A Primer for Aryan Nations and Its Alliance With Christian Identity

In 1978, Richard Butler went to the bottom of his property in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and placed a sign that read "Aryan Nation." With this act, "the political arm of the Aryan Nations was announced to the world" (Flynn & Gerhardt, 1989, p. 55). Since then, Aryan Nations has made several political statements, typically anti-Semitic in nature, blaming the Jewish people for the world's problems. These political statements are juxtaposed with the religion Christian Identity.

Christian Identity, like most religions, has several denominations. The denomination to which most Aryan Nations members belong is "two-seed-line" identity. According to Jerome Walters (2001), the basic tenet of two-seed-line identity is that Eve had sex with both Adam and the devil on the same day. As a result of these two unions, Eve gave birth to two infants, one from Adam, whose descendants are today's Anglo-Saxons, and the other from the devil, whose descendants are today's Jewish people. According to two-seed-line identity adherents, the Jews are not God's chosen people; the true inheritors, and as stated in the Bible, are "the White Anglo-Saxon Germanic people of the world" (Walters, 2001, p. 89). Two-seed-line adherents believe the Jews are trying to deceive the world into thinking that the Jewish people are the true inheritors of God's promises rather than the Anglo-Saxon race. These anti-Semitic religious beliefs are coupled with an equally anti-Semitic political ideology. According to Christian Identity, throughout the centuries the Jews have not only misinterpreted the Bible but have successfully deceived millions into believing that they are the chosen people. Additionally, they believe that the United States, because of the current tide of political correctness combined with the liberal teachings in schools, provides a fertile ground for the Jews to spread their world-dominating agenda.

Recently, some members of Aryan Nations have begun to distance themselves from the view that two-seed-line identity should serve as the sole religion of their movement. Interviewees were quick to point out this is not an abandonment of biblical ideology but a wish to expand membership to other like-minded brethren in the world. All of this, they say, is consistent with the original guidelines set out by the now-deceased founder, Richard Butler. Although some may see an alliance between Aryan Nations and followers of Islamic Jihad as odd, social-psychological theories by Blumer, Allport, and Sherif describe how this type of action can take place.

The Basis for Prejudice

According to Blumer (1958), a "sense of group position" is the basis for prejudice. Blumer suggests that prejudice can best be understood from a relational perspective, where one's own group should stand in the social order in relation to another group. According to Blumer, the dominant group believes it is superior to the

subordinate group; believes the subordinate group is intrinsically different from it; believes its own group, the dominant group, has proprietary claim over certain rights or resources; and believes the subordinate group desires a greater share of these rights and resources. Blumer further explains that the feelings of superiority over and distinctiveness from the subordinate group provide the basis for the dominant group's aversion toward the subordinate group and that the feeling of proprietary claim to rights and resources coupled with the belief that the subordinate group is encroaching on these resources together create the dynamic force behind prejudice. The current article outlines the beliefs of Aryan Nations and examines how these beliefs serve as the basis for its prejudice toward Jewish people. Through an examination of its beliefs as well as statements from members of Aryan Nations, this article will examine the extent to which the prejudice of Aryan Nations toward the Jewish people is consistent with Blumer's theory of prejudice. Specific questions to be addressed are whether members of Aryan Nations see themselves as superior to and inherently different from Jewish people and whether members of Aryan Nations see their group as having certain proprietary rights or resources that are being encroached on by Jewish people.

Reducing Prejudice

Gordon Allport in *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) provides recommendations for the reduction of prejudice. These recommendations, because they share the idea of bringing together members of different groups, have come to be known as the contact hypothesis. In Allport's view, for intergroup prejudice to be reduced through contact, certain situational conditions are necessary. Specifically, prejudice is likely to be reduced when contact between the groups is prolonged and focuses on achieving a shared goal, status between the groups is equal, and the new policy of integration is officially or institutionally supported.

An example of reducing prejudice through these means is provided by a classic study conducted by Sherif and colleagues (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). In this study, stereotyping and prejudice were first created between the Eagles and Rattlers, groups of boys at summer camp, and then were later reduced by creating situations in which the two groups needed to work together to solve a problem, repairing the camp's water system and fixing a broken-down truck.

Although Sherif et al.'s (1961) findings suggest that given the right conditions, prejudice can be reduced through contact, it is also possible that efforts to unite Aryan Nations and followers of Islamic Jihad could result in factionalism or horizontal hostility (Blake, Shepard, & Mouton, 1964; Brewer, 1999, 2000; Brown & Wade, 1987; Deschamps & Brown, 1983; White & Langer, 1999). Research by White and Langer (1999) suggests that horizontal hostility can arise when members of a minority group believe that the addition of new members will devalue the in-group identity by making it less distinctive. Similarly, research by Brown and

colleagues (Brown & Wade, 1987; Deschamps & Brown, 1983) suggests that people do not always react positively when boundaries between their groups are diminished. The results of research by Brewer (1999, 2000) also suggest that to the extent that in-group boundaries and intergroup distinctions engender feelings of identity and loyalty to one's group, cooperation with an out-group can threaten an individual's social identification. Thus, contrary to the contact hypothesis, members of Aryan Nations may resist attempts by Aryan Nations leaders to form an alliance with followers of Islamic Jihad.

The present study examines the rationale for the ideological alliance between Aryan Nations and Islamic Jihad from the perspective of a shared goal. The article further examines whether a shared goal, that of defeating a common enemy, the Jewish people, effectively reduces prejudice between the two groups or leads to factionalism.

Present Research

Through a series of interviews and observations of Aryan Nations, the present research examines the ideological changes currently occurring in Aryan Nations, including recent problems with Christian Identity, and explores the rationale for an alliance between Aryan Nations and Islamic Jihad. Of specific interest is how a shared hatred of Jewish people, as well as a belief in a Jewish conspiracy to control the media and U.S. government, has fostered an ideological alliance between these two groups. Last, this research explores how members of Aryan Nations are able to rationalize a potential alliance with a group once seen as the "enemy."

Method

The research for this article was gathered during 4 years beginning in August 2001, approximately 1 month before 9/11, and ending in August 2005. Nonparticipant observations of Aryan Nations rallies, annual meetings, and press conferences were conducted.¹ During this time, qualitative interviews were also conducted with approximately 25 members of Aryan Nations. The initial number of Aryan Nations members who agreed to participate in the interview was larger. However, once the interviews began, not everyone who had originally agreed to participate felt comfortable with the format or they refused to answer questions or decided they did not want to be "on the record." Past researchers have pointed out the difficulty of working with fringe groups and overcoming feelings of distrust (cf. Ferrell & Hamm, 1998). Only information from participants who answered all of the questions was used in the analyses. Information from participants who provided partial responses or refused to answer some of the questions was discarded.

To establish guidelines for the interview and ensure the safety of the interviewer as well as the safety of those being interviewed, a working oral contract, which outlined the purpose of the interview, interview procedures, and means for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, was presented at the start of the interview. Participants were informed that the purpose of the interview was for a research project on Aryan Nations and not to gather information for the government or for watchdog organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League. Additionally, participants were informed that the interviewer was not a member of Aryan Nations and did not share the ideologies of the group.

To ensure anonymity, participants were informed that real names would not be used in any documents or presentations. Initially, when conducting interviews, no first names were used. Instead, the males who were interviewed were addressed as "Pastor." The title of pastor was chosen for males because most of the males interviewed considered themselves a pastor. The three females were addressed as "Miss" or "Mrs." Participants referred to the researcher as either "Doctor" or "Professor." Using these titles helped establish and maintain a formal and respectful setting to the interview procedures. However, as some members began to distance themselves from Christian Identity, they did not want the title *pastor* to be used. At this point in the research, interviews had already been conducted for more than 3 years, and it had been well established that the researcher did not agree with the hate messages espoused by the group; therefore, it was agreed that during the interviews, first names would be used. Last, participants were informed that conversations would be recorded only if the person being interviewed gave permission. To ensure anonymity, once the interviews were transcribed, it was agreed that the tapes would be destroyed.

In addition to interviews, information about the religious and political beliefs of the group was obtained from Aryan Nations Web sites. Most extremist groups use the Internet to express their beliefs to other like-minded individuals. During the course of conducting interviews, several leaders of Aryan Nations referred the researcher to their organization's Web site for quotes because "it was stated good" on the Web site. Consequently, quotations from the Internet were also included in the analyses. In some instances, quotations that had been previously e-mailed from an interviewee to the researcher later appeared on the organizational Web site.

Results

Anti-Jewish Sentiment

According to Kathleen Blee (2002), women who join organized racist groups learn to become anti-Semitic. Although most interviewees for this project were male, Blee's assertion is relevant because most of the interviewees started off in other

organized groups hating Blacks, not Jews.² It was their journey into hate that allowed most of them to “come to the realization that the Jews are to blame for most of the world’s problems” (interview, Aryan Nations member, November 21, 2005). Take, for instance, this quote from a man who joined Aryan Nations after belonging to several other White supremacist organizations:

I have been in several organizations over the years—skinheads, Klan, you name it. The problem is they have it all wrong. They want you to believe that the Blacks and Hispanics are to blame for society’s problems; they aren’t. They are too dumb to figure it out. Once I realized that, I figured somebody bigger had to be behind all the problems in the U.S. It wasn’t until I met [a friend] that I began to understand that the Jew was behind most of it, and they are using the Blacks and Christians to get their agenda across.

Part of the transformation in their target of hatred is a direct result of their belief in a “Jewish conspiracy.” For members of Aryan Nations, the Jewish people serve as scapegoats and are to blame for a host of problems. Results of these interviews reveal a belief in a Jewish conspiracy, specifically, a “Jewish-controlled government”³ and a “Jewish-controlled media.”

One of the most frequently expressed beliefs among interviewees was that Jewish people working in the World Trade Center knew in advance of the planned attack and therefore did not go to work on that day. One member stated that the number of people in the buildings did not add up, and the only way that could happen is if the Jews who worked in the building told other Jews not to go into work that day:

just like the number, 6,000. . . . Six thousand people died in the World Trade Center bombings. . . . That’s not true because just recently the number’s down to 3,070 . . . 3,070 . . . Now you take that building between, what, quarter to 9 and 9:30 or quarter after 9 . . . in the morning, do it . . . do the . . . Just think about how many people usually generally work, worked in them buildings. Fifty thousand a building, I believe the number was. Now 9 o’clock in the morning, quarter after 9, 9:30, whenever it happened to be, I don’t remember now. . . . Figure in how many were there, approximately how many were there on any other given day, then factor in how many were there and how many were killed and how many had a, really had a chance to get out of the building, out of the area before the buildings came down, you know, and I know you could [*sic*] all of that by factoring, you know, an average, you know, and the numbers aren’t gonna jive even that 600, even that 6,000, that was only like 25 people a floor, you know, and I was told by people that work there, or had worked there in the past, you know, electricians or whatever . . .

Another common view is that Jews control the media. In Aryan Nations, *media* is a buzzword for *Jew*. Most members cling to a stereotype that was started with the Protocol of the Elders of Zion, which stated that Jews have a secret desire to control most social institutions, such as the media, banks, schools, and the government. One of the first conspiracies that one of the authors (Borgeson) was subjected to upon

entrance into this area of research was that the Jewish-controlled media covered up the Jews' involvement in 9/11:

How come immediately after 9/11 there was pictures floating around of Jews dancing on top of buildings? And within minutes the pictures were never seen again? That's because the mainstream Jew media wanted them hushed up so no one knew they were behind it. Are those conspiracies? No, I think they're actual fact.

Aryan Nations as a Christian-Based Organization

One important distinction made by most interviewees between Jews and non-Jews is religion. According to the interviewees, religious differences make Jews intrinsically different. Aryan Nations is based on Christianity. Racism and anti-Semitism, for most Aryan Nations members, have been justified through Christian Identity, the cornerstone of the Aryan Nations movement for more than 25 years. Members of Christian Identity believe the real chosen people (the Twelve Lost Tribes) are the White, Anglo-Saxon races of the world. Christian Identity adherents believe that there is currently a battle between good and evil taking place on this earth and that all Whites must unite against the Jew to get their chosen rights back when Jesus returns. For most members, race and anti-Semitism are so tied in with Christian Identity that to step back from the religion is seen as becoming soft on race and anti-Semitism, which the founder of the organization—Richard Butler—believed in.

I believe that the Identity message is the only religion that should be allowed. You can't let a bunch of sand niggers into the organization—you are supposed to be about the Aryan race. Last time I looked, they sure the hell were not Aryan and they shouldn't be allowed to even be in this country.

The above quote reflects two important beliefs. The first is that Christian Identity is the only religion. Consequently, people with any other religious ideology should not be allowed to join Aryan Nations. The second is that Muslims are Black and therefore should not be allowed to join Aryan Nations. When the above interviewee was informed that not all Muslims are dark skinned, he replied,

I haven't seen any. And even if there is some that are White, they should be shot for deserting their race. Whites are the chosen descendants of the Bible, and Whites need to wake up and reclaim back our heritage from the children of Satan.

As the above quote demonstrates, race is inherently tied to Christian Identity. According to the interviewee, people of the White race should be Christian. Whites who do not adhere to a Christian faith are traitors to their race. Two-seed-line identity is so tied into the belief system that some adherents see the addition of any other religion, in this case, Islam, as part of Aryan Nations's mission as a sin that should not be tolerated:

Because if they were to interview me, like you are now, they would find out that we do not let anyone in the organization that is not Christian. Period. There are a lot of groups out there that claim to be Identity, but they will let anyone join as long as they are open to the message. That is not good enough because all down through scripture, every time we have aligned ourselves with heathens, pagans, or unbelievers, God has taken his blessing off of us and we have failed.

Changing Religious Views

For some members of Aryan Nations, it is not the two-seed-line identity that is important to the cause, only religious justification. One member expressed this by stating, "I could never hate someone for the sake of hating them. I base my views on the Bible. The typical race-hating thing gets you nowhere." As a result of this change in position on diversity of religion, Aryan Nation leadership has decided to allow Muslims into their organization. As a matter of fact, leaders say that by allowing different religions, they are living up to the "mission statement" of founder Richard Butler:

As was the stance of the founder, Pastor Richard G. Butler, Aryan Nations was developed as an institution of Aryan Virtue, along with the Aryan Brotherhood, which coalesced as a splinter within the prison systems, becoming the foremost means of protection for Aryans whose freedom has been confiscated. Pastor Butler's conception was never an Identity only organization, and it is not today, however, as people in the past visited the "Church of Jesus Christ ~ Christian" in Hayden, Idaho, it was all too clear that the groups nucleus was the Identity Belief, as it still is today. . . . The decision was made to make the Aryan Nations two distinct entities, the first being the Aryan Nations Proper, and the second, the Tabernacles of the Phinehas Priesthood, the Biblical wing of this Organization, this was done because many Identity adherents sought their own group to themselves, while our views and systems were attracting the most virulent and therefore the most worthwhile membership, although they were not necessarily Biblical Believers. Butler would not turn these men away, and neither will we. (*Aryan Jihad*, n.d.)

In response to the flood of e-mails the organization received, those in charge of the Web site posted a clarification notice describing their nonreligious stance as well as their belief that the Islamic Jihadeen is biblically supported:

There has been a little misunderstanding as to what our perspective is as far as an alliance with Islamic Jihadeen, and our own Phinehas Priests. There are some out there who would like to imply that we are now an Islamic Fundamentalist Organization, and this is erroneous, our Organization is not for the support of any religion, however based on the history of the Aryan Nations, the rules and conduct are based on Biblical Law, and the general views of the bulk of this organization is the acceptance of Aryan Messianic Identity, or other forms of what is called "Christian Identity" in most circles. (*Aryan Jihad*, n.d.)

Responses to the above two postings reflected such great interest in Aryan Nations by non-Christian Identity members that the leaders of Aryan Nations are planning to make liaison appointments of different religions within the organization.

Shared Hatred

When asked why the Aryan Nations was aligning itself with Islamic Jihadists, interviewees were quick to point out that the current Christian Identity movement was dead and that the movement lacked spine:

The White Christians in today's movement don't have the fervor that the Muslims have. They wouldn't lay down their life for a cause. As a matter of fact, throughout most of the movement, there have been very few people who would lay down their life and be a martyr. If we could instill that pride back into our race, the Jews wouldn't have a chance against us. We would be fighting with such veracity they wouldn't be able to stop us.

In response to the dying Christian Identity movement in America, Aryan Nations members began to develop a camaraderie with those that they felt had more "spine," Islamic Jihadists:

There is a strong brotherhood with Muslims. Doesn't matter where you live, you are going to go to the aid of another Muslim. It is the way that Christianity used to be before they brought it to the whole world. That was our religion, the White races, for his children on the earth.

As Aryan Nations began to branch out in its religious denominations, its members began to see that they shared similar group characteristics with Muslims: analogous moral values, perceived media persecution, and hatred for the U.S. government.

The following quote reflects the belief that adherents of Islam have moral values similar to those of the Aryan Nations:

Further, seeing the errors of the past, we have taken this approach with alliances to Islamic adherents, because we find their standards of morality to be nearly analogous to our own, and their resolve to uproot and destroy the fallen tree of the Garden, the satanic "jew," to also be analogous to our own desires and devotion. In this sense, Islam is our ally. . . . Islam has not been dishonored as much by "jew"ish incursion, therefore Islamic Jihadeen have safeguarded the purity of the very instinct for self preservation for which we hold the most vociferous esteem. (*Aryan Jihad*, n.d.)

The quote then continues with a statement that reflects the belief that the Jews control the media and as such are able to present a negative view of Muslims.

The "jews" have used their control of the media to portray the Islamist as a wild animal, the subhuman of the world, as they preach the virtues of themselves along with

all races and false creeds that are ignoble enough to collaborate with them. Whereas the Aryan realizes that Ishmael was blessed by Yahweh, and prophesied to always be the fist in the face of his enemy. Ishmael's descendants are among the Arabs and Israelites today, and far be it from us to say that Yahweh was wrong, and the "jews" are truthful. (interview, Aryan Nations member, November 21, 2005)

The next part of the message explains why followers of Islam are the allies of Aryan Nations.

The Ishmaelite is our ally because he is the fist that takes the first strike against Satan's spawn, the "jew." The Aryan is the knock out punch, the Children of Yahweh will destroy His enemies, and Ishmael will stand aside his brother Isaac and receive his share of the glory and honor. What Yahweh has blessed, is blessed as far as Ishmael, and what Yahweh has cursed and condemned to death, as far as the demonic seed falsely known as the "jew," all of the spiritual sodomites of this world along with their minions of deceived zionist collaborators, all of their horses and all of their men will not put humpty dumpty "the jew" back together again. (*Aryan Jihad*, n.d.)

Then the message goes on to reassure those members of Aryan Nations who believe Christian Identity is at the center of the organization of its importance while asserting that members of other religions will be welcomed into Aryan Nations.

The Tabernacles of the Phinehas Priesthood will remain the Biblically based foundation of the Aryan Nations, however, membership of the Aryan Nations will continue to welcome Islamists and adherents to other moral religions into our ranks. There is nothing new being done within the Aryan Nations, all of our brothers and sisters were always welcome to join our ranks, and as it was in the past, the Biblical views of the Aryan Nations conception will remain the basis of our structure. (*Aryan Jihad*, n.d.)

Last, the message explains that the two groups view jihad somewhat differently, but both still show superiority to those of the Jewish faith:

There is one differentiation that the Islamic Believer must accept that is not necessarily Islamic, and this is our modus operandi regarding Jihad. Islamic Jihad is the cleansing of Islamic controlled lands, once the land is decontaminated; the Jihad is over, on the other hand, our Jihad is more specific, and it is strictly and primarily for the extermination of the satanic "jew," worldwide, we see no borders, nor boundaries. Any country found to be allowing the "jew" to exist, will be at the receiving end of this Jihad, they will find no sanctuary, as the freedom fighters of Islam have been denied sanctuary even from their own "brothers." Whoever harbors or aides the "jew" will be considered a "jew," thus receiving the same fate, or worse. Aryan Nations respects no borders, nor any political system that will collaborate or hide our enemies, the genocide of satanic "jewry" is the foremost thrust of our Jihad, and this is the main purpose of the Aryan Nations. (interview, Aryan Nations member, November 21, 2005)

Both groups also share a vile hatred for the U.S. government. Their loathing is based on the conspiratorial belief that the “Jewish run United States government” is trying to control citizens of both countries.

The US is trying to destroy their religion [Islam]. They [the United States] have twisted their words to suit their cause [world domination for Jews]. The Jewish run government is trying to control Islam, like they did to us. For those we talk to, they want to go back to “true Islam.” You see they are like those in identity—we say “true Christianity.” We both have a lot in common, and we shouldn’t fight with each other. We both are forms of religions; biblically we should not be fighting because we both recognize one god. (interview, Aryan Nations member, November 21, 2005)

By seeing similarities in the United States’s handling of Islam, Aryan Nations’s leadership believes that it can help Jihadists—because Aryan Nations has already “gone through what they are currently going through.”

Discussion

The present research examined Aryan Nations members’ prejudice toward Jews. Consistent with Blumer’s (1958) theory of prejudice, Aryan Nations members view themselves not only as inherently different from Jews but as superior to them. Specifically, Aryan Nations members believe that religious differences make Jews not only different from them but also inferior to them. According to Christian Identity, White Anglo-Saxons, not the Jewish people, are God’s chosen people. The tenets of two-seed-line identity further suggest that Jewish people are Satan’s offspring. Additionally, it is evident that members of Aryan Nations see themselves as having certain proprietary claims to the United States or things that are American and believe that Jews are not only encroaching on but usurping these rights and resources. For example, members of Aryan Nations believe that the government of the United States as well as the media are controlled by Jews and that Jews are using the media to shape and control America’s views, presenting Jews in a positive light and Muslims in a negative light. Thus, Aryan Nations members, through their attitudes and orientation toward Jews, clearly exemplify the four key features of Blumer’s relational model of prejudice.

The present research also examined the growing alliance between Aryan Nations and followers of Islamic Jihad as expressed through interviews with members of Aryan Nations. According to the contact hypothesis, for prejudice to be reduced between two groups, one necessary component is a superordinate goal. Aryan Nations and Islamic Jihad share two common enemies and therefore two common goals. As stated previously, the media or perceived media persecution provides one common threat to both groups. Members of Aryan Nations and Islamic Jihadists

each believe the media presents their group in a biased and unfair light. The second and stronger shared threat is the Jew. Defeating the Jew provides the two groups with a strong superordinate goal and basis for an alliance.

However, as is evident from the contrasting viewpoints expressed by interviewees as to whether Aryan Nations should remain a solely Christian organization, there is a growing difference between members of Aryan Nations with regard to an alliance with Islamic Jihadists and the role of Christian Identity in their organization. Some members of Aryan Nations believe that their organization and its members should remain tied solely to Christian Identity. Others believe that people from other faiths, specifically Muslims, who share Aryan Nations's goal of defeating Jews, should be allowed to join Aryan Nations. Leaders in Aryan Nations have tried to satisfy people on both sides of the argument by dividing Aryan Nations into two distinct entities, a political entity, Aryan Nations Proper, and a religious identity, the Tabernacles of the Phinehas Priesthood, and also by expressing respect for the followers of Islamic Jihad.

Given that not all members of Aryan Nations are in agreement about the centrality of Christian Identity to the organization or about allowing Muslims to join Aryan Nations, it is predicted that consistent with previous research (Blake et al., 1964; Brewer, 1999, 2000; Brown & Wade, 1987; Deschamps & Brown, 1983; White & Langer, 1999), infighting within Aryan Nations will increase, leading to factionalism or horizontal hostility. As mentioned previously, group members do not always respond positively when boundaries between groups are diminished, especially if the new members would devalue the in-group identity (White & Langer, 1999). Consequently, group members may resist working toward a superordinate goal in an attempt to preserve their in-group distinctiveness.

Last, the contact hypothesis suggests that working toward a superordinate goal will serve to reduce prejudice between two groups only if they are successful at achieving that goal (Blanchard, Weigel, & Cook, 1975; Worchel, Andreoli, & Folger, 1977; Worchel & Norvell, 1980). The results of research by Worchel and colleagues (Worchel et al., 1977; Worchel & Norvell, 1980) suggest that when cooperation between two previously competitive groups is unsuccessful, the out-group will be blamed for the failure unless there is an obvious and alternative cause for the failure. Given that it is highly unlikely that Aryan Nations and Islamic Jihad will be successful at accomplishing their shared goal of defeating the Jewish people, the alliance between these two groups is likely to be unstable and short-lived. As Brewer (1999, 2000) points out, two groups working together to achieve a shared goal requires trust. Especially when there is contempt or fear of the out-group, in the face of failure, blaming and scapegoating are likely to occur.

Last, the present research examined how some members of Aryan Nations are able to reconcile their definition of race with their recent alliance with Islamic Jihadists. The interviews and ethnographic data support the hypothesis that participation with Islamic Jihadists does not change the racial views of Aryan Nations members. The available literature on White supremacists has a tendency to focus on

“collective social-psychological factors” (Blee, 1996), suggesting that individuals keep the same rigid beliefs throughout a lifetime (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). Although these data are consistent with that supposition, it also shows the complexity of beliefs that members share and how exception to the racist rules can be made. The field of cultural studies (cf. Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1991; Turner, 2002) extends the first proposition. Cultural studies go further than the social-psychological exploration of discrimination and prejudice by suggesting that the culture of Aryan Nations and the orientation and behavior of its members are less overtly structured and consequently allow for changes in ideology to fit “their mission.” Behavior among individuals is not homogenous, and such ideological differences cause friction between the members. The present research suggests that the Aryan Nations ideology is more fluid than previously thought and is changing. Part of the change is because of infighting within current White supremacist movements, juxtaposed with lack of action by “White kindred.” The recent alliance with Islamic Jihadists has led to the development of a new social movement ideology that allows the White supremacist movement to remain alive in the United States. Although an alliance with Islamic Jihadists is consistent with Aryan Nations’s anti-Semitic views, practices of selective adoption (Blee, 1996) are necessary for Aryan Nations members to remain consistent with their racist views.

In conclusion, Aryan Nations’s prejudicial views toward Jews are consistent with Blumer’s (1958) model of prejudice. Although there is a growing alliance between certain members of Aryan Nations and Islamic Jihadists, it is predicted that this alliance will continue to cause infighting within Aryan Nations and may lead to the creation of splinter groups within Aryan Nations. Last, it is predicted that an alliance between Aryan Nations and Islamic Jihad will be an unstable one.

Notes

1. No Islamic Jihadists were interviewed for this article; the research reflects the desires of U.S. Aryan Nations members to align internationally with other anti-Semitic groups. Future research needs to be done to compare and contrast similarities and differences of rationalizations of alignment for each group.

2. The average person in Aryan Nations has been in approximately three hate groups before joining Aryan Nations.

3. Some members refer to this as ZOG, or Zionist Occupation Government.

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